THE HISTORICAL CONSTRUCTION OF “RACE” (ESPECIALLY IN NORTH AMERICA)

I. 2 sources of racial thought, in its formative period (18th-19th century)
   A. after-the-fact rationalization of slavery: did racism cause slavery or did slavery cause racism?
   B. natural science

II. European views of Africans prior to mass use of slaves in New World colonies
   A. Before Europeans encountered Africans. (Frederickson: some positive, some negative
   B. Africans encountered in Africa through trade, including slave trade (Blum, p. 112: quote from Davidson)
   C. Africans in the New World colonies, esp. “U.S.”

III. Why did Africans become the sole mass slave labor force in the (N. Am. & Caribbean) colonies? [slaves and indentured servants. Fred: 54]
   A. Greed vs. racism: where is the morality?

IV. Development of labor system into “racial” slave labor: degeneration of conditions for the African ancestry group in US colonies

V. National differences in the treatment of Africans and Native Americans: English, Spanish/Portuguese, French. [see handout comparing English and Iberian systems of slavery]
   A. differences in how “race” came to be understood, as result of differences in slavery and colonization systems. [see handout comparing English and Iberian with respect to “race”]

VI. Role of Christian and Enlightenment “universalism” in the development of racial thought. Irony that greater belief in human equality among English than Iberians led to more degraded/less human view of “blacks.”

VII. Role of 18th century natural science. Scientific and religious forms of racism.


IX. Strengthening of slave system in South despite developments in VIII. Invention of cotton gin. When was a defense of slavery produced? How does this relate to issue of justifications of slavery in earlier periods?

X. What “whiteness” means (Blum: 119)